

# SPEAKING WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT ALCOHOL

## A PARENT'S GUIDE

Here are some suggestions on having a conversation with your teen about the effects of underage drinking, and how driving decisions play a role in their safety.

### WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?

Parents sometimes hesitate to impose rules against underage drinking or even to discuss drinking with their teens. They might be embarrassed or assume their teen is not at risk...

**74%** OF TEENS SAY THEIR PARENTS ARE THE LEADING INFLUENCE ON THEIR DECISIONS ABOUT ALCOHOL

**ASSUMPTION:** My teen is not interested in drinking. **FACT:** According to data from *Monitoring the Future* national survey, about 75% of teens try alcohol outside the home before graduating from high school.



**ASSUMPTION:** My teen's friends are good kids who do not drink alcohol. **FACT:** About 33% of high school seniors have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days.

### THE EFFECT OF DRINKING ON THE BODY/PHYSICALLY



**How do you think drinking helps or hurts your body?** Consuming alcohol causes harm to your developing brain.



**What physical activities do you want to do in the future that drinking could hurt?** Since alcohol is a depressant, it slows down your body's functions.



**Why do you think some young people drink if they can get hurt?** Sometimes teens feel invincible, and they don't think anything bad will ever happen to them.

### PARENT TIP

**Does your teen know they can count on you in a dangerous situation?** Make a code word with your teen to be used if they feel in danger.



## HOW DRINKING AFFECTS DECISIONS/CHOICES

**How do you think drinking affects choices young people make?** Alcohol affects your decision making abilities, judgement is changed when alcohol is involved



**What problems can happen when young people choose to drink?** They can pass out from too much alcohol, they can get in fights or make other bad decisions.



**Why do you think some young people drink if it can have a negative impact on their choices?**

Possibly peer pressure, or they don't believe anything dangerous could happen to them.



**How does drinking before the age of 21 affect someone?** Teens that drink underage are more likely to become addicted, and their future could be affected if they get into legal or academic problems.



## HOW ALCOHOL AFFECTS DRIVING ABILITY

**How can alcohol affect your ability to operate a car safely?** Alcohol delays your reaction time, decreases coordination, and causes difficulty reacting to signals and sounds.



**What problems can happen when a young person chooses to drink and drive?** A DUI can permanently tarnish your teen's record, cost thousands of dollars, or worse - cause death, and/or serious injury to anyone involved.



**Why do you think some young people choose to drive impaired?** Alcohol can alter your judgement, and reduce your inhibitions making you feel like you have the ability to do anything - like, drive safely. The fact is, this is not true!



### FACT



Underage drivers are **17% more likely** to be involved in a fatal car crash with alcohol in their system.

